

NEWS RELEASE

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State Troopers Urge Motorists to Watch Out for School Buses, *Encourage Extra Caution in School Zones*

MONTGOMERY — As students return to schools throughout the state, Alabama state troopers encourage motorists to watch out for school buses and to be particularly cautious when traveling through school zones, according to Col. W.M. Coppage, director of the Alabama Department of Public Safety.

Coppage said the beginning of the school year brings changes in traffic patterns and heightens the need for traffic safety, especially in school zones and around school buses. "There's increased congestion in school zones, including pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and that requires increased caution on the part of all motorists," said Coppage.

"We ask that all Alabamians do their part to ensure the safety of our children as they travel to and from school each day," he said.

Coppage reminded motorists that state law requires vehicles to stop when meeting or following a school bus that is stopped to receive or discharge passengers, even if the opposing traffic is separated by a median or safety zone. "Traffic must stop for buses as children get on and off, and motorists may not proceed until the bus has retracted its stop signal and turned off its flashing red lights," he said.

State troopers advise motorists driving in school zones to:

- Slow down and drive more carefully;
- Be vigilant in watching for children crossing the road; younger children particularly may be easily blocked from view because of their height;
- Exercise patience when driving in school zones, especially during peak hours;
- Consider taking an alternate route to avoid school zones when school is convening or recessing;
- Use safe and designated drop-off points when picking up or dropping off children at school.

Last year in Alabama three persons were killed in crashes involving school buses, and five persons were killed in and around school zones; 322 drivers were convicted of passing a stopped school bus.

Aug. 5, 2005

for more information contact:

Public Information/Education • P.O. Box 1511 • Montgomery AL 36102-1511

(334) 242-4445 • <http://www.dps.state.al.us/>

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